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ABSTRACT

This document is intended to serve both as a primer and as an annotated bibliography about educational vouchers. As a primer, it introduces the reader to the concept of vouchers and to the variety of issues--including political, economic, legal, and educational issues--associated with vouchers. As an annotated bibliography, it provides a summary of the issues and the available literature representing points of view of advocates and opponents. The annotators have made a special effort to let the original authors speak for themselves. (Author/IRT)

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EDUCATION VOUCHERS

A PRIMER

The National Institute of Education
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Washington, D.C. 20208

Center for the Study of Public Policy
123 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts
(617) 547-8285

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Voucher Idea 1

Some Variations 3

Voucher Politics 5

Legal Issues 6

Voucher Economics 7

Alum Rock 8

The General Debate 9

The following pages serve both as a primer and as an annotated bibliography about education vouchers. As a primer, they introduce the reader to the concept of vouchers and to the variety of issues associated with it. As an annotated bibliography, these pages provide a summary of materials published about education vouchers from 1955 through 1973. The result is an accurate summary of the issues and the available literature representing the points of view of advocates and opponents. The annotators made a special effort to let the original authors speak for themselves; they have not editorialized.

Prepared by Philip C. Richter and Mary Jo Hollender, Center for the Study of Public Policy, Cambridge, Massachusetts, under Grant No. 10007(82), funded by the National Institute of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

September, 1974

The Voucher Idea

Friedman, Milton. "The Role of Government in Education." In Economics and the Public Interest, edited by Robert Solo, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1955.

Friedman reexamines the extent of justifiable government intervention in education. He argues that the function of schooling in preparing students for citizenship and civic leadership warrants government provision of financial support for education but does not warrant government administration of schools in a free economy. He recommends that government involvement in education be limited to requiring a minimum level of schooling, financing that schooling, and approving educational services. Financing would be accomplished by giving parents vouchers redeemable for a specified maximum sum per child per year, a method similar to that used in the G.I. Bill of Rights. Parents would be free to spend the voucher and any additional sum on the purchase of educational services from public or private (profit and nonprofit) enterprises. Under special circumstances, Friedman concedes that traditional public schooling would be justified, but should be supported through voucher receipts. Friedman believes that such a voucher system would provide greater freedom of choice and, consequently, more diversity of educational services.

Areen, Judith, and Jencks, Christopher. "Education Vouchers: A Proposal for Diversity and Choice." Teachers College Record, February, 1971.

The authors discuss the failings of the present public school system: the clumsy, ineffective political mechanisms which allow the public schools to remain unaccountable to their clients; the exclusive ability of affluent families to take responsibility for their children's education by living in areas with "good" public schools or by enrolling their children in private schools at their own expense; and the political arrangements in neighborhood schools which ensure that nothing is done to offend powerful constituents. A voucher system seeks to free schools of these restrictions and weaknesses. Areen and Jencks emphasize that one of the most important advantages of a voucher system would be the encouragement of diversity and choice within the public system. They point out the benefits of also including private schools in a voucher system. Private participation would put pressure on the public sector to initiate changes desired by the school clientele, including those changes that may be politically awkward but substantially supported. The authors reexamine the meanings of "public" and "private" education, and suggest that the criteria for classification be how schools are run rather than who runs them. They outline the regulated compensatory voucher plan and the restrictions that would be placed on all voucher schools, and discuss the common arguments against voucher systems.

Jencks, Christopher. "Giving Parents Money to Pay for Schooling: Education Vouchers." The New Republic, July 4, 1970.

Jencks examines OEO's proposal to test the regulated compensatory voucher plan and discusses the objections of liberals to education vouchers. In response to their criticisms, he reviews the Education Voucher Agency's authority to regulate the school marketplace, the function of compensatory vouchers to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged children are satisfied, and the need for school admission procedures to guarantee equal treatment for children from different racial and economic backgrounds. He predicts that vouchers would cause some shrinkage of the public sector and a corresponding growth of the private sector. Jencks asserts that public schools do not discriminate less than private schools, but that public schools simply do so in subtler ways. He believes that voucher schools would discriminate less than the public schools currently do, and he points out that a voucher system would offer more educational alternatives.

Arons, Stephen. "Equity, Option, and Vouchers," Teachers College Record, February, 1971.

Arons believes that the voucher plan has the potential to restructure schools systematically to achieve the goals sought by various educational reform groups. He explores a variety of ways that the tax structure, per pupil pricing, school regulation and accountability, admission procedures, and the relations of nonpublic schools to the state could be reformed under a publicly administered voucher system. He recommends that regulations be instituted to prevent racial discrimination, that student transportation be provided without charge, that loans be made available by the government for the construction of new schools, and that new district boundaries be drawn to maximize racial and economic heterogeneity. In addition, he proposes that the governing boards of individual schools include parents in order to give them more control than they would exercise as consumers. Arons believes, however, that the current political environment is unfavorable for successful systemic reform, and he therefore suggests that voucher advocates begin to organize a broad base of support among those whose interests vouchers would promote and protect.

Friedman, Milton. "The Voucher Idea." The New York Times Magazine, September 23, 1973.

The public school monopoly, like all monopolies, Friedman argues, is inefficient and unresponsive to consumers. He believes that the public school system can be successfully reformed only if free enterprise and competition are given a greater role. He proposes that parents receive a voucher for each child to pay for a year's tuition at the school of their choice. Besides improving the schools, a voucher system would benefit the community, decrease violence, allow voluntary racial mixing, and protect the interests of minority neighborhoods. Friedman opposes regulated and compensatory vouchers because they limit competition and freedom of choice in the education marketplace. He points out that without compensatory funds and regulations improvement of urban schools would be slow. In the long run, however, vouchers would particularly benefit the poor, because for the first time they would be able to exercise free choice in the education of their children.

Some Variations

Clark, Kenneth. "Alternative Public School Systems." Equal Educational Opportunity, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969.

Clark claims that, especially in schools which enroll primarily black and underprivileged children, public education suffers from pervasive and persistent inefficiency in both providing quality educational opportunities and producing adequate student achievement. He asserts that remedial and compensatory programs have not been successful. Ironically, they have tended to entrench rather than to ameliorate the problems within schools by perpetuating the monopolistic privileges of the schools and their white middle class power elite. Clark maintains that public schools have stalled on efforts to integrate. Alternative schools which compete with the public schools and which promote regionalism and therefore desegregation should be developed. Social institutions such as businesses and labor unions should be encouraged to operate schools. Competition between public and nonpublic schools, he believes, would vitalize public education.

Coleman, James. "Toward Open Schools." The Public Interest, Fall, 1967.

Coleman argues that it is a mistake to infer from the findings of "Equal Educational Opportunity" (Coleman, 1966) that only racial integration can raise the educational achievement of blacks. On the contrary, he points to evidence that integrated schools would not provide equal opportunities for educational achievement. He advances a plan that would both further racial integration and enrich the educational environment of low achievers without confounding these two goals. To provide equal opportunities for educational achievement, Coleman proposes that privately operated instructional alternatives from which parents may choose be made available on a performance contract basis. Such an arrangement would force the public schools to compete with private contractors in providing education which improves student performance. To achieve racial integration, he proposes that classes include children from different schools and that extracurricular and community activities also be arranged to bring together students from different schools and backgrounds.

Fantini, Mario. "Public Schools of Choice and the Plurality of Publics." Education Leader, March, 1971.

Fantini notes two significant trends in recent educational reform: the growth of alternative schools and proposals for tuition voucher systems. Although these developments are currently independent of each other, he believes that alternative schools could supply the diverse programs that might be demanded under a tuition voucher system. Fantini suggests that his proposal be applied to public schools, because they would remain readily accessible to their constituents. To guarantee choice, the schools participating in the program must be committed to offering educational alternatives.

Coons, John E. "Recreating the Family's Role in Education." Inequality in Education, Harvard Center for Law and Education, March, 1970.

Coons advances a government finance plan for public and private schools which would permit parents to choose the kind of education their children receive, the schools they attend, and the amount of money they wish to spend on their children's education. The tax effort made by each family toward education would correspond to a level of per pupil spending in a group of schools from which parents may choose. Tax effort would be equalized for all families by equating effort with a percentage of the family's income. A ceiling would be applied to taxes on more wealthy families so that it would continue to be in their interest to choose tax-supported public and private schools rather than to choose private schooling for which parents would pay directly. Coons maintains that the way the government would allocate money under this system would avoid church-state problems because the child, not the school, would be the recipient of public funds. He predicts that integration would increase in metropolitan areas, particularly in the long run, and he argues that his proposal would make high cost education accessible to disadvantaged children.

Carr, Ray, and Hayward, Gerald. "Education by Chit: An Examination of Voucher Proposals." Education and Urban Society, February, 1970.

Carr and Hayward discuss the voucher plans of Friedman, Jencks, Sizer and Whitten, and Coleman. Although there is general agreement among the voucher advocates about the need for broad, systemic educational reform, Carr and Hayward conclude that the voucher plans do not include sufficiently specific and thorough proposals for such reform. For example, the authors maintain that all of the plans assume without warrant that competition and efficiency would improve the quality of education. Furthermore, only Coleman's proposal includes a plan to desegregate the schools and a framework that provides alternatives that are subject-specific and comprehensible so that parents can make wise decisions about the schools in which they enroll their children.

Fuchs, Estelle. "The Free Schools of Denmark." Saturday Review, August 16, 1969.

Fuchs describes the free school system in Denmark and discusses the advantages of implementing such a system in the United States. In Denmark, where seven percent of the student population attends free schools, a wide variety of nonpublic schools receive government subsidies. As long as the school meets minimum state standards, it may receive low interest building loans, eighty-five percent of the salaries received by teachers in state schools, and fifty percent of the cost of government services provided to state schools. Parents pay whatever costs remain. Fuchs believes that a similar system in the United States would stimulate creativity in the public schools and that the diversity it produces would reduce disruptions and unproductive conflict among students, parents, teachers, and administrators. She cautions, however, that if parents can privately supplement the voucher value, flight of middle class children from public schools might result.

Voucher Politics

McCann, Walter. "The Politics and Ironies of Educational Change: The Case of Vouchers." Yale Review of Law and Social Action, Summer, 1972.

McCann discusses three major obstacles inherent in the system of public education which impede the implementation of a voucher program: the resistance of the public school establishment to being held accountable to parents and the reluctance of educationists to accept parental judgment on educational priorities and goals; the diffusion of power within the local and state public school administrations which makes the decision-making process complex and consensus hard to achieve; and the reluctance of communities to commit themselves to a program whose continuance and outcome are uncertain. McCann points out that the unanswered questions that cause uncertainty and unwillingness to experiment can, ironically, be answered only by field demonstrations.

Foster, Benjamin. "The Case for Vouchers." The Black Scholar, May-June, 1973.

Foster outlines the regulated compensatory voucher plan and describes how black Americans could use it as a tool to shape the education of their children. He believes that black parents and the black community are most qualified to define and provide their children's education. A voucher system would encourage alternative educational approaches, ensure accountability of schools to parents, provide greater freedom to individuals within the school system, and secure a more equitable distribution of resources among schools. Foster stresses that all efforts at educational reform should include in the decision-making process the participation of those for whom the policy is made.

Jencks, Christopher. "Private Schools for Black Children." The New York Times Magazine, November 3, 1968.

Barring a general improvement in the social and economic position of black America, Jencks doubts that black children's school achievement is likely to improve. Consequently, he views the present urban public school crisis primarily as a political problem and secondarily as a pedagogic one. Black parents should be assisted in starting private schools for their children; these schools would be neither more nor less successful than the present public schools, but they would create a political modus vivendi tolerable to both sides. Jencks identifies the perpetuation of professional and bureaucratic norms (i.e., white middle class values) in the public schools as a major source of discontent among blacks. Therefore, he recommends that black laymen control the new schools. He compares the problems faced by blacks today with the crisis that precipitated the founding of Catholic schools a century ago. He argues, however, that blacks should receive tax support for their private school program.

Lekachman, Robert. "Vouchers and Public Education." The New Leader, July 12, 1971.

Lekachman examines Milton Friedman's voucher proposal, the regulated compensatory voucher plan, and, in lesser depth, the unregulated compensatory voucher, the compulsory private scholarship voucher, the effort voucher, and the achievement voucher. He argues that unregulated voucher plans would retard progress toward integration and increase the disparity of resources between rich and poor. The regulated compensatory voucher plan, however, has adequate safeguards against racial and economic discrimination, but it has the potential to create a bureaucracy that is as rigid as the present public school bureacracy. The Education Voucher Agency would not be strong enough politically to maintain and enforce the voucher regulations. Because only unregulated vouchers would be politically viable, he opposes all voucher proposals.

Legal Issues

Areen, Judith, and McCann, Walter. "Vouchers and the Citizen - Some Legal Questions." Teachers College Record, February, 1971.

Areen and McCann discuss three major legal issues related to the regulated compensatory voucher plan: racial segregation, separation of church and state, and state regulation of educational quality. Although the courts have ruled some tuition plans unconstitutional, the authors believe that there are grounds to rule in favor of the regulated compensatory voucher plan. Areen and McCann distinguish between a plan whose intent is to segregate by race and a plan whose intent is not to discriminate although individual or scattered cases of segregation may arise as a result of parent choice. Should such segregation arise in a regulated voucher system, the authors believe that the courts might order those individual schools to desegregate rather than rule against the whole system. The clearly nondiscriminatory admissions procedures of the regulated compensatory voucher plan as well as the courts' previous favorable rulings on freedom-of-choice plans lead Areen and McCann to conclude that the courts might rule favorably on these grounds. The authors believe that whether church-related schools may participate in voucher programs will be determined by the position the Supreme Court adopts on purchase-of-services legislation. They note, however, that even if such purchase-of-services legislation were found unconstitutional, there remain fundamental arguments in favor of vouchers, for example, that vouchers are a private (parental) expenditure of public funds. Finally, Areen and McCann point out that it is clearly within the rights of the states to set minimum academic standards and to regulate the admissions policies of nonpublic schools. In a voucher system the danger is not that the states would not have sufficient authority to regulate and set standards for nonpublic schools, but that the states would be too restrictive and would hamper the free play of educational choice.

Hentoff, Nat. "Vouchers: Educational Choice." Civil Liberties, February, 1971.

Hentoff opposes the Western Missouri ACLU position that all education voucher plans should be opposed by civil libertarians. He agrees with the ACLU chapter that voucher plans which include parochial schools ought to be ruled unconstitutional, but he believes that other nonpublic schools, for example, Harlem Prep and CAM Academy in Chicago, are more responsive to the needs of students and more successful in accomplishing the goals of the public schools than the public schools themselves. Hentoff maintains that the presence of nonpublic schools will intensify and accelerate reform of the public schools on the neighborhood level. Although he believes that alternative schools are generally more accountable to parents than are public schools, he claims that Jencks' proposal should have more stringent accountability requirements.

Voucher Economics

Krughoff, Robert. "Private Schools for the Public." Education and Urban Society, November, 1969.

Krughoff outlines the regulated and unregulated voucher proposals and examines the ways they might work in large city school districts. Assuming alternatives to the public schools would be generated by entrepreneurship, he analyses the economics of such private school enterprises. He concludes that competition within the education marketplace would encourage more effective and efficient uses of public funds than the public schools do now. An entrepreneur seeking to maximize profits would be sensitive to consumer demands and would be likely to work harder and more creatively to cut costs.

Ginzberg, Eli. "The Economics of the Voucher System." Teachers College Record, February, 1971.

Ginzberg maintains that, despite large expenditures, recent government programs designed to improve the quality and quantity of services available to the poor have been ineffective in substantially benefitting those for whom the programs were intended. He compares the programs that have failed with the voucher proposal and concludes that a voucher system would be unlikely to reform public education successfully. He believes that vouchers would raise per pupil costs without necessarily improving the quality of education, that standards of eligibility would be difficult to determine, and that regulations governing admissions would do little either to open denominational schools to large numbers of blacks and poor children of a different faith or to increase the number of blacks and poor children in predominately white private schools. In addition, Ginzberg argues that because school performance is impossible to define and measure in ways acceptable and meaningful to all parents, it is unlikely that parents could choose schools wisely on their own. He asserts that new, community-centered schools would not be as numerous as voucher advocates presume because lack of expertise, financial resources, facilities, and workable, longterm contracts with school personnel would discourage those interested in starting new schools.

While he does not discount the value of a federally funded educational system which competes with the local public schools, Ginzberg opposes the voucher system because it would not achieve the goal of providing substantial desegregation or higher quality education for the poor.

Dentler, Robert. "Vouchers: A Problem of Scale." Teachers College Record, February, 1971.

Dentler examines the feasibility of vouchers in large- and small-scale sites. Using statistics on the New York City and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania school districts - along with Jencks' projected rate of private school choice by parents - Dentler concludes that the demand for new private schools would outrun the ability of the cities to pay for or supply the needed resources. He believes, however, that vouchers could create educational alternatives. He advocates the use of vouchers in conjunction with performance contracting and a policy of district decentralization.

Alum Rock

Mecklenburger, James. "Vouchers at Alum Rock." Phi Delta Kappan, September, 1972.

Mecklenburger describes the Alum Rock, California voucher demonstration and expresses five reservations about its ability to demonstrate the value of the full voucher system. Only one-third of the district is involved in the demonstration; parents choose from among school programs, not from competing schools; private and parochial schools are excluded; the Education Voucher Agency has only an advisory role; and the future of the demonstration relies on biannual grant renewals. He maintains that these limitations are so great that the Alum Rock voucher system can be construed as merely an administrative convenience for distributing compensatory OEO funds, adding nothing to the process of parent choice. Joel Levin, whom Mecklenburger quotes, points out that parents do in fact have a choice and that they perceive that their choices influence the financing of school programs. Mecklenburger describes the alternative programs available to parents. He concludes that although it is too early to make a final evaluation of the Alum Rock voucher project, the demonstration provides an opportunity for the community and professional educators to ask important questions about parent choice.

Overlan, S. Francis. "Regulated Compensatory Voucher Plan." The Ripon Forum, April, 1973.

The author notes that the voucher plan is opposed by nearly every professional educational organization and every special interest group that has a stake in the public school system. Overlan responds to their criticisms and explains how the regulations designed by the Center for the Study of Public Policy prevent segregation and discrimination. He emphasizes that one of the major objectives of vouchers is to encourage public schools to offer diverse programs and to make these offerings available to everyone. Under the regulated compensatory voucher plan, all government-funded schools - whether public

or private - would become "public", i.e., neither restricting admissions to neighborhood residents nor refusing to provide clients with full information on what they are doing. Overlan discusses the progress made toward initiating voucher tests, specifically in Alum Rock, California, where a public-only voucher demonstration is currently under way. In order to create as much diversity as possible, each Alum Rock voucher school has launched three to five mini-schools on its campus, and there are indications that many parents are making thoughtful school choices for their children. In addition, the racial balance of the schools has not been upset by parent choice. The Alum Rock Board of Education is committed to studying the desirability of moving to the full regulated voucher plan should legislation be passed enabling private schools to participate.

The General Debate

Coyne, John. "Slates and Hamsters." National Review, March 23, 1971.

Coyne begins with the assertion that Americans have lost faith in the system of public education because it is inflexible and unresponsive. He believes that the flexibility and responsiveness inherent in the voucher system would remedy this malaise. The educational establishment, however, opposes the voucher system because administrators and teachers would be forced either to satisfy parents or loose their secure financial position. Coyne lists four major arguments against vouchers: they would turn the public schools into dumping grounds for students rejected from private institutions; encourage racial segregation; promote hucksterism in education; and benefit parochial schools, thus violating the constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state. The regulations included in Jencks' proposal would make it impossible for schools to discriminate either racially or intellectually or to make false or misleading claims about themselves. The constitutionality of including parochial schools in a voucher system must be decided by the Supreme Court. Coyne suggests that the voucher system may increase the demand for all types of nonpublic education. Citing Friedman, he points out that parochial schools have enjoyed popularity not because they are church-related but because they are private and within the financial reach of middle and working class families.

Selden, David. "Vouchers - Solution or Sop?" Teachers College Record, February, 1971.

Selden characterizes recent voucher plans, particularly Jencks' proposal, as a "classic example of good intentions gone bad." He criticizes voucher advocates for having failed to realize that more money, not competition, is what is needed to improve the quality of education in public schools. Voucher programs, like open enrollment and freedom-of-choice plans, would neither reach the hard-core disadvantaged students without forced bussing nor sufficiently guard against racial segregation. Selden discounts the European experience with systems similar to vouchers and claims that vouchers, like other educational gimmicks, divert attention from the need for more money for public schools.

Overlan, S. Francis. "Do Vouchers Deserve At Least a Sporting Chance?" American School Board Journal, November, 1972.

Overlan gives a brief history of the education voucher concept. He points out that the regulated compensatory voucher model proposed by OEO and the Center for the Study of Public Policy differs from other voucher models in that its primary goal is educational innovation. This voucher system is designed not to dismantle the public schools, but rather to encourage diversity and choice within the public system. Nevertheless, whether the regulated compensatory voucher plan is faulty, faultless, or in need of revision can only be found by carefully controlled local tests.

Berube, Maurice. "The Trouble with Vouchers." Commonweal, January, 1971.

Berube believes that vouchers hold great potential for promoting change within the public school system. Nevertheless, he charges that the political naivete of those actively advocating voucher demonstrations has all but ensured their failure. He criticizes Jencks' requirement that there be a consensus of opinion in favor of a voucher test among the factions in potential demonstration sites, and he contends that voucher proponents have underestimated the opposition from the public school establishment. The voucher idea has become an elitist proposal for reform - a "strategy without a constituency" - about which supporters have had to manufacture interest at a grass roots level. Berube also faults the regulated compensatory voucher plan for failing to involve parents more directly in ways other than financing, to deal with negative teacher attitudes, and to propose specific educational program alternatives.

Havighurst, Robert. "The Unknown Good: Education Vouchers." Phi Delta Kappan, September, 1970.

Although Havighurst cautions that an unregulated voucher plan would channel educational resources toward the rich and away from the poor, he is a proponent of the regulated compensatory voucher plan, which he believes would create educational alternatives. He believes that a demonstration in which at least fifteen percent of the students from a racial and economic cross-section of the school population choose private alternatives would provide the basis for a fair and impressive test of vouchers.

Clayton, Stafford. "Vital Questions, Minimal Responses." Phi Delta Kappan, September, 1970.

Clayton responds to "Giving Parents Money for Schooling: Education Vouchers," an article by Christopher Jencks appearing in the same issue of Phi Delta Kappan. Clayton criticizes Jencks' proposal for a voucher experiment because it does not adequately define how the test would be designed, what controls would be exercised, and what criteria would be used to assess the results. He expresses the reservation that the Education Voucher Agency would have so many responsibilities that it would be unable to carry each out fully. He suggests a "super-EVA" to control centrally the local EVAs and to assure federal enforcement of the voucher plan regulations. Citing trends in public-

subsidized education in Europe, Clayton questions whether vouchers would cause flight from public to independent and church-related schools.

Lyon, David. "Capitalism in the Classroom: Education Vouchers." Federal Reserve Bank Business Review, December, 1971.

In Lyon's opinion, public schools are under attack because they have failed, despite yearly budget increases, either to raise student achievement or to respond to the needs and desires of students and parents. He explains how the voucher plan would institute competition and parent choice in the education marketplace and thus would give rise to alternative educational approaches. Lyon presents the arguments for and against the voucher system and advocates limited testing in order to assess its prospects.

The following articles appeared in the form of a debate under the heading "Controversy Over Federal Experimentation with 'Education Vouchers'" in The Congressional Digest, August-September, 1972.

Christopher Jencks, Associate Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education. From testimony before the Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity of the U.S. Senate, December 2, 1971.

Jencks argues that the regulated compensatory voucher system would neither cause segregation nor necessarily benefit parochial schools. The regulations of the voucher system would make discrimination impossible and might discourage parochial schools from participating. He emphasizes that the goal of the voucher system is educational innovation. He outlines the proposal and discusses the functions of the Education Voucher Agency - a group empowered to supervise a voucher demonstration.

Carl Megel, Legislative Director, American Federation of Teachers. From Compact, February, 1971.

The American Federation of Teachers believes that only adequately financed and properly staffed public schools will provide quality education. Megel challenges the contention that vouchers would improve education by creating competition; he suggests instead that competition would inhibit teacher creativity and encourage ostentatious teaching methods. Vouchers would generate divisiveness within society by unconstitutionally financing church-related schools and would disperse already meager educational funds. The AFT opposes any educational program to improve the schools that does not propose to do so by spending more money.

Center for the Study of Public Policy. From Education Vouchers: A Report on Financing Elementary Education by Grants to Parents, December, 1970.

The Center for the Study of Public Policy believes that within the current power structure of public education policy-making is virtually inaccessible, and schools and administraors remain largely unaccountable to parents. Only affluent parents can control their children's education, either by choosing where they will live or by enrolling their children in private schools. A voucher system, however, would provide choice for all parents. It would encourage the development of new educational alternatives, would allow groups of parents to set up their own schools, and would promote creative educational thinking on all levels. Those who defend the public school monopoly claim that competition and choice in education would be inefficient, would encourage consumers to protect their private interests at the expense of the public welfare, and would overtax the ability of parents to make wise choices for their children. These arguments ignore the controls built into the regulated compensatory voucher plan and presume that 'experts' really know more than parents about the likely effects of specific schools on specific children.

Ed Doerr, Director of Educational Relations, Americans United for Separation of Church and State. From testimony before the Committee on Education and Labor of the U.S. House of Representatives, April 1, 1971.

Doerr alleges that vouchers violate the constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state. He charges that although schools would not be able to discriminate among applicants for admission under the regulated compensatory voucher plan, each school's curriculum, faculty, and ideology would determine the kind of student likely to apply. In this way, vouchers would promote divisiveness in society. Furthermore, the voucher system would require a large and complex bureaucracy without guaranteeing higher quality education. The Americans United for Separation of Church and State calls upon Congress to enjoin OEO's involvement with vouchers until Congress specifically authorizes their continuance.

John Baker, Acting Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. From testimony before the Committee on Education and Labor of the U.S. House of Representatives, April 1, 1971.

The position taken in 1970 by the Baptist Joint Committee and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention - both of which opposed OEO's proposed voucher experiment - recognized that public education, particularly for the poor, must be reformed. The committees believe that the voucher system would create problems without eliminating the present deficiencies and inequities in public schools. Vouchers would violate the constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state. A pluralistic educational system - a goal of the voucher plan - would fragment and polarize society. In addition, the committees believe that it is poor public policy to divide the limited resources for education between competing systems: one accountable to the public, the other accountable only to private interests.

Esther Swanker, Vice President, Center for Urban Redevelopment in Education. From testimony before the Committee on Education and Labor of the U.S. House of Representatives, April, 1971.

Swanker believes that the voucher project provides an opportunity for educators to create a system of education within the public sector which benefits poor children. Currently, schools attempt to perform the almost impossible task of providing, within one classroom, programs to suit the needs and interests of students who range from retarded to gifted. Interest-centered schools would increase the effectiveness of teachers and administrators by allowing them to concentrate their efforts in specific areas and, consequently, improve the education of their students. She suggests that New York City's experience with special interest high schools has shown that such schools tend to integrate themselves. In response to AFT and NEA charges that increased spending is the only solution to the problems of the public schools, Swanker counters that the public schools have not improved in recent years in spite of the dramatic rise in their budgets. She maintains that the public schools should be held accountable to the people whose children attend them. Making schools accountable can best be done by making the public schools compete with private alternatives in a voucher system. Parochial schools would benefit less than is generally supposed, because

they will want to maintain a nearly exclusively Catholic patronage and may not want to open their operations to public scrutiny. In closing, she notes that vouchers are not a panacea, but they are a good alternative to the present system with its failings.

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